MOSBY AND HIS CAVALRY MEN.

The Famous Rangers Refight Their Battles at Fairfax.

Special correspondence of The Florida Star. FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, Va., Sept. 10. -Historical reminiscences are revived by the reunion of the Sixth Virginia cavalry, better known as Mosby's men. This is the first general gathering of the famous fighters since the memorable day in April, 1865, when, through the exigencies of unsuccessful combat they stood before their chieftain in last

review. The choice of the meeting place seems peculiarly appropriate; for at Fairfax Court House it was that occurred the initiatory operations of the famous Virginian's rangers. The region hereabout was so frequently the theater of the partisan battalion's movements, forsooth, that the name of the leader became indelibly associated with it. "Mosby's Confederacy." as the district inclosed by Warrenton, Fairfax and Harpers Ferry was term ed, is to this day recognized as a geographical distinction.

The idea of an organized and extended partisan warfare in connection with the maneuvers of the regular Confederate army originated with Colonel Mosby in the early part of 1862. He had at that time been reduced to the ranks from the staff of Captain, afterward General, Jones of the Fifth Virginia cavalry by an election of officers sanctioned by the Confederacy. Captain Jones was also ousted from his command. He was succeeded by Fitz-Hugh Lee, who years later became United States consul in Havana.

Mosby, having been adjutant, felt disheartened at finding himself a private once more. But brighter days were looming up in the distance. General J. E. B. Stuart, the brilliant West Point cavalry tactician, knew somewhat of Mosby. He detailed him as scout. Opportunities for the display of prowess were not lacking. Before many moons had passed the scout was in a position to ask the commander for his sanction of the formation of an auxiliary body of fighters to harass the federal troops in localities where larger detachments could not display their force to advantage. Stuart consented He refused, however, to give the eager Mosby more than a quintet of his mounted warriors.

Not in the least daunted by the smallness of his command the embryo cavalry leader took himself away with his horsemen. No pains were taken in concealing from the troops of Confederate cavalry the nature of the work Mosby had in view. The anticipated influx of newcomers to the ranks of the rangers took place, and Mosby soon had three or four score of hardy adventurers under him. Young men from the "F. F. V.," attracted by the novelty and prospects of unlimited fighting, flocked to his standard.

Considerable ridicule at first greeted the company. "Mosby's Conglomerates" and "Johnny's Foundlings" its members were dubbed by the jealous ones in the regular enlisted service. Banter was turned into praise in short order, however, as the exploits of the "Foundlings" and the "Conglomerates" were noised abroad. Many of the erstwhile scoffers eventually found themselves clamoring for admission. When Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appointtox Court House, nearly three years later, Mosby's battalion numbered 700 men.

One of Mosby's first schemes was to endeavor to drive from the vicinity of Fairfax and Warrenton the First New Jersey cavalry under Colonel Percy Wyndham, Sir Percy Wyndham, as described in my father's last book, "New Jersey Troops In the Gettysburg Campaign," by Samuel Toombs, was an English nobleman, a veteran of French, Aastrian and Italian wars and just the man to cope with Mosby. The rangers captured Wyndham's sentinels and vedettes. They assaulted his outposts. Notwithstanding his ultimate failure to dislodge the English adventurer, Mosby caused him a deal of trouble.

Raids were Mosby's favorite agencles in the campaign against the invaders of the south. Here and there, everywhere, he led his men. They literally lived in the saddle as if emulative of Genghis Khan and his invincible Tartars. Among Mosby's largest raids were the Chantilly raid, resulting in the capture of a detachment of Union cavalrymen; the Boot raid, Billy Smith raid, Ice Cream raid, Coffee raid, the fatal Harpers Ferry raid, the two Calico raids, the Greenback raid and the Hanging raid. The latter resulted in the capture of seven of the pangers by one of General Custer's captains The rangers were summarily hanged within sight of their homes in Front Royal. On the breasts of the executed placards were pinned reading, "Such is the fate of Mosby's men."

One of the captives, Overby by name, called out before his death, "My last moments are sweetened by the reflection that for every man you murder this day Mosby will take a tenfold vengeance."

Retaliation was shortly in reach of the partisans. Three days later a

piatoon of Custer's men was captured prisoners were drawn up in single file. and seven were chosen by lot. They were to die. The unfortunate soldiers met their doom like stoics.

But for the fierce raids and charges of these rangers and their rapid moves on the rear and flanks of Sheridan's army the hero of Winchester would iron spool. have been able to press southward through the Shenandoah valley after the defeat of General Early. This would have enabled him to concentrate his army of 50,000 men on the rear of Lee's forces. Lee's cohorts were already hard pressed in front by Grant with 130,000 men, the flower of the northern forces. Sheridan, in his report of the Shenandoah campaign, paid a high compliment to Colonel Mosby. He admitted that the rangers prevented him from following out Grant's orders to press forward to Lynchburg, where could have been administered a crushing defeat to the Confederate army under Lee.

Few of the Virginia colonel's exploits created the furore that did his capture of General Edwin H. Stoughton in March, 1863. The general was quartered at Fairfax Court House. In a drizzling rain, with but 29 men, Colonel Mosby started on his dangerous and well nigh foolhardy mission.

After the affair was triumphantly terminated the colonel gave the account of this venture: "We passed the outlying guards by stating we were of the Fifth New York cavalry, with dispatches for General Stoughton. With the aid of 'Big Yank' Ames, a stalwart deserter from the Union lines, we found our way to the building where lay our game. The sentry at the door was quietly overpowered. Violent knocking brought to the entrance a night robed figure, which proved to be Lieutenant Prentiss of the general's

"We were then four miles inside the enemy's lines and amid hundreds of hostile soldiers. Caution was needed.

"Prentiss let us in on our informing him that we were of the Fifth New York. We pushed up the stairs and entered the commandant's room. He was sound asleep. His snorings were resonant in the extreme.

"With such environments," said Colonel Mosby, "I could not afford to await his convenience or stand on ceremony. So I gave the sleeping man a slap. Its effect was electric. The brigadier rose from his pillow and in an authoritative tone inquired the meaning of the rude treatment. He had not realized of his own staff.

"I leaned over and said to him, 'General, did you ever hear of Mosby? 'Yes,' he quickly answered. 'Have you eaught him? 'No,' I said. 'I am Mosby. He has caught you.' In order to deprive him of all hope I told him that Stuart's cavalry held the town and that General Jackson was at Center-

"With a look of agony and despair him 'Yes.' 'Then take me to him,' he said. 'We were classmates at West of C. A. Robinson, to-wit: Point.' 'Certainly,' I said, 'but I am in a hurry. Dress quickly.' He did so, and we left the town with General Stoughton, Lieutenant Prentiss and chairs; one sideboard; one extension dining about 100 other prisoners; also a lot of table; one lot of dishes and waiter; one steel NO OTHER LINE AFFORDS fine horses."

When Mosby's accomplishment was reported to Major General Stuart, that three toilet sets; three rockers and three cane officer issued a general order in which chairs; two sets portiers; three rugs and one he referred to the feat "as almost unparalleled in war."

One great secret of Mosby's success was the fact that the number of his force was always exaggerated. He aimed toward this end and has been known to have his men drag branches of trees behind their horses to create a dust cloud sufficient for a large body of troopers.

As an instance of his daring it might be told how one dark night in 1864 he cut 40 wagons from out the very middle of Phil Sheridan's supply train, which was stretched out five miles,

Mosby became a strong admirer of General Grant after the war and Lee during his campaign for the presidency. He was the coiner of the expressive and alliterative phrase "the solid south" and by reason of his dashing ability and strenuous personality formed one of the striking characters Confederate movement.

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Ten pieces of upholstered furniture; one piece of upholstered rocker; six rocking chairs; four center tables; one secretary and book case; seven upholstered dining room range; one kitchen table; one hall rack; one angle lamp; two large pitchers; two sets of andirons; five bedroom sets, three pieces each; lot of matting; one lot of carpets; two carpet sweepers; one lot of laundry utensils; one lot of window shades; or so much thereof as will be necessary to satisfy said decree and costs. WM. F. RICHARDS,

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